

**Ambassador Stephen D. Mull**

**MSPO Reception in Kielce**

**September 2, 2013**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased to welcome representatives from the Polish Government and both our nations' militaries, as well as industrial partners and research institutes here today. It's precisely this mix of people that will need to work together to help Poland carry out its impressive military modernization plan to bolster Poland's defense capabilities while ensuring that Poland remains part of a fully interoperable and deployable NATO force structure.

The Polish and United States governments have been and will remain the closest of allies: committed to each other's

defense through NATO and to each other's economic well-being through a dynamic trade partnership. But as this trade show clearly demonstrates, the partnership between U.S. industry and Polish industry will also play a critical role in our countries' economic and physical security. The evolving threat landscape means that nimble, innovative industrial partners must work and evolve together in order to guarantee the freedom and security of our nations against forces hostile to us.

Although the US and Poland have been formal allies for less than 15 years, our military relationship is intense and productive. We have stood side-by-side on the battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan and both our countries have paid a tremendous price in both resources and loss of life to bring security to a troubled region. Poland remains such a valued partner that, even as combat operations of the International Security and Assistance Force draw to a close in Afghanistan,

we continue to look for ways to partner with Poland to secure our jointly-won gains in Afghanistan – gains in better governance, increased life expectancy, rights for women and children and the most vulnerable. And, of course, we will continue to collaborate closely with Poland as we work with all of our NATO partners to strengthen European security.

I would be remiss if I didn't also mention our cooperation on the ground here in Poland. Last November we answered a pledge by Presidents Obama and Komorowski to partner in establishing a U.S. Aviation Detachment at Łask Air Base, opening a new chapter in our bilateral relations by the first ever continuous stationing of American troops on Polish soil. This Detachment – flying C130s and F16s – has already helped both of our air forces — train together three times – and there is more to come. Another powerful indicator of our cooperation is that Poland was our first partner to ratify an agreement for ballistic

missile defense under which Poland will host missiles interceptors at Redzikowo Air Base as part of a missile defense system to protect NATO members against increasing threats. The United States remains committed to making the European Phased Adaptive Approach to missile defense happen in Poland, and we have already begun preliminary work reviewing the Redzikowo site.

Turning back to industry, there's a powerful nexus between government and industry for the United States and for Poland. Our joint Declaration on Strategic Cooperation commits both America and Poland us "to promoting defense industrial research and technology armaments cooperation." Reducing trade barriers will further enhance our cooperation, and was the purpose of the 2012 bilateral Reciprocal Defense Procurement Agreement, which waives the "buy-national" requirement in defense procurement. Also, in an effort to further strengthen our

defense cooperation and commitment, the U.S. Department of Defense and the Polish Ministry of National Defense are currently negotiating a Research, Development, Testing and Evaluation Agreement that will pave the way to allow co-development of joint defense projects. I look forward to concluding this agreement, as it will benefit both our countries.

We continue to look for ways to bring our defense sectors together, whether it is through our hosting of a bilateral U.S.-Poland Defense Industry Day last April, or through looking at the creation of a bilateral Defense Industry Forum that would provide a regular venue for communication and collaboration among our governments, industries, and research centers. Given the need for partnership created by Poland's military modernization program, the timing is perfect for such a forum.

Of course, we already see U.S. companies deeply involved in the Polish defense sector, with United Technologies'

investments in PZL Mielec (Sikorsky) and WSK Rzeszów (Pratt & Whitney) being the largest so far. The Sikorsky-Mielec facilities are perfectly equipped to deliver state-of-the-art helicopters to the Polish armed forces, and planning is also underway to export these products to other nations.

In closing, I wish everyone here a successful stay in Kielce and I look forward to increasing our business partnerships with the common goal of bolstering our common security.